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## CONSTRUCTIVE STUDIES IN THE PROPHETIC ELEMENT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

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By WILLIAM R. HARPER,  
The University of Chicago.

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### I. THE GENERAL SCOPE OF THE PROPHETIC ELEMENT.

#### CONTENT AND CLASSIFICATION.

§ 1. **Preliminary Inquiry.**—The study of prophecy is so largely a study of history that the methods of historical study must be adopted. This means, first of all, the arrangement of the prophetic material in *chronological order*. The basis of such arrangement rests upon a preliminary examination of the authorship, historical background, occasion, and purpose of each book or document. This introductory work must be performed either by or for the student. The difficulty of the task is, of course, very great; its necessity is, however, in no way minimized by this difficulty.

See on Hebrew history: EWALD, *History of Israel*, 7 vols. (1843 ff., 3d ed. 1864 ff., transl. 1869 ff.); WELLHAUSEN, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (1878, 5th ed. 1899, transl. 1885); RENAN, *History of the People of Israel* (1887-93, transl. 1888-95); KITTEL, *History of the Hebrews*, 2 vols. (1888-92, transl. 1895); McCURDY, *History, Prophecy, and the Monuments*, 3 vols. (1895-1901); KENT, *A History of the Hebrew People*, 3 vols. (1896-99); CORNILL, *History of the People of Israel* (1898); W. E. BARNES, art. "History of Israel," *HASTINGS's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. II (1899); PATON, *Early History of Syria and Palestine* (1901); OTTLEY, *A Short History of the Hebrews to the Roman Period* (1901); GUTHE, art. "Israel," *Encyclopædia Biblica*, Vol. II (1901); WADE, *Old Testament History* (1901, 2d ed. 1903); H. P. SMITH, *Old Testament History* (1903).

STADE, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, 2 vols. (1881-88); WELLHAUSEN, *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte* (1894, 3d ed. 1898); KOSTERS, *Het Herstel van Israel in het Persische Tijdvak* (1894, German transl. 1895); WINCKLER, *Geschichte Israels in Einzeldarstellungen*, 2 vols. (1895-1900); ED. MEYER, *Die Entstehung des Judenthums* (1896); VAN HOONACKER, *Nouvelles études sur la restauration juive* (1896); GUTHE, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (1898); PIEPENBRING, *Histoire du peuple d'Israel* (1898); STADE, *Die Entstehung des Volkes Israel* (1899); LÖHR, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (1900).

§ 2. **Materials** for such inquiry may be obtained (1) from each of the books or writings concerned, by an examination of the diction and style, of the allusions to institutions and historical events, and of the

religious ideas; and also (2) from outside sources, among which may be included the Egyptian, and especially the Assyrian, monumental literature.

See SCHRADER, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament* (1883, transl. in 2 vols., 1885-88; SAYCE (editor), *Records of the Past* (new series), Vols. I-VI (1889-92); EVETTS, *New Light on the Bible and the Holy Land* (no date); SAYCE, *The Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments* (3d ed. 1894); McCURDY, *History, Prophecy and the Monuments*, Vols. I-III (1895-1901); HOMMEL, *The Ancient Hebrew Tradition as Illustrated by the Monuments* (1897); T. NICOL, *Recent Archaeology and the Bible* ("Croall Lectures" for 1898); MORRIS JASTROW, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria* (1898); IRA M. PRICE, *The Monuments and the Old Testament* (1899); C. J. BALL, *Light from the East* (1899); DRIVER, "Hebrew Authority" in HOGARTH'S *Authority and Archaeology, Sacred and Profane* (1899), pp. 1-152; KELLNER, *The Assyrian Monuments Illustrating the Sermons of Isaiah* (1900); R. F. HARPER *et al.*, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature, Selected Translations* ("World's Great Books," Aldine edition, 1901); BUDDE, "The Old Testament and the Excavations," *American Journal of Theology*, Vol. VI (1902), pp. 685-708; T. G. PINCHES, *The Old Testament in the Light of the Historical Records and Legends of Assyria and Babylonia* (1902); FRIEDRICH DELITZSCH, *Babel and Bible* (1902, transl. by C. H. W. JOHNS, 1903); SAYCE, *The Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia* ("Gifford Lectures" for 1902); KÖNIG, *The Bible and Babylon* (1902, transl. 1903); HILPRECHT, *Explorations in Bible Lands during the Nineteenth Century* (1903); G. A. COOKE, *A Text-Book of North Semitic Inscriptions* (1903). KITTEL, *The Babylonian Excavations and Early Bible History* (1902; transl. 1903).

WINCKLER, *Keilinschriftliches Textbuch zum Alten Testament* (1892, 2d ed. 1903); LIDZBARSKI, *Handbuch der nordsemitischen Epigraphik nebst ausgewählten Inschriften* (1898); WINCKLER UND ZIMMERN, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament* (3d ed. 1902); LIDZBARSKI, *Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik*, Bd. I (1900-1902), Bd. II (1903- ); OETTLI, *Der Kampf um Bibel und Babel* (1902); GUNKEL, *Israel und Babylonien: Der Einfluss Babyloniens auf die israelitische Religion* (1903); ZIMMERN, *Die Keilinschriften und das alte Testament* (1903); C. BEZOLD, *Die babylonisch-assyrischen, Keilinschriften und ihre Bedeutung für das Alte Testament* (1904).

§ 3. **Certain Principles** are accepted as guiding an inquiry of this nature. Among these may be noted the following:

1. Evidence as to the date, authorship, origin, etc., of a writing, based on a study of the language, style, historical allusions, etc., is of the highest value, provided it has been gathered in a scientific way.
2. Full recognition is to be made of the general method of history-writing employed in ancient times; viz., compilation.
3. The writer or speaker, in each case, addressed the people of his own times, and, consequently, shaped his material to influence those times primarily.
4. The sacred narratives as such are to be accounted neither poetical pieces, nor historical treatises, nor scientific theses; but rather as

literature illustrating and intended to teach the great principles of the religious life.

5. Distinction is to be made sharply between the record of an event, whatever may be the date of the record, and the event itself.

6. Distinction is also to be made between the original form of an utterance, and any later literary form in which it may have been clothed.

7. A writer describing an event of earlier times does not always separate clearly the sympathies and antipathies of his own times from those of the age to which the event belongs.

8. The writer or compiler is influenced in his selection of material and in his form of presentation by the purpose which he has in mind.

§ 4. **Certain Problems** exist, for which some kind of solution is necessary before real progress can be made, in the study of the prophetic element. The more important of these are the following :<sup>1</sup>

1. The scope and character of the work which is to be ascribed to Moses.

2. The particular psalms, if any, which are to be assigned to the authorship of David.

3. The content, character, and relative position of the portions of the Hexateuch commonly ascribed to the two prophetic narratives known as J and E.

4. The date, circumstances of origin, and general interpretation of the prophetic writing ascribed to Joel; in other words, the question whether this is the earliest, or one of the latest, of the prophetic writings.

5. The origin and date of the book of Deuteronomy, whether in early times, such as those of Moses, or in the days of Josiah, about 621 B. C.

6. The origin and date of chaps. 40-66 of Isaiah, whether they come (*a*) from one author, viz., the Isaiah of Hezekiah's times, or an exilic prophet; or (*b*) from several authors, all of whom lived in the period of the exile or later.

7. The relationship of chaps. 40-48 of Ezekiel to the preceding and following development of the priestly idea, as seen in the portions of the Hexateuch ascribed to P.

8. The question of insertions in earlier prophets, especially Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah, from the hands of later prophets.

9. The date and place of Zechariah, chaps. 9-11 and 12-14.

<sup>1</sup> These problems will be given further consideration in connection with the various periods to which they belong.

10. The relationship and the editorial union of the various sources of the Hexateuch, known as J, E, D, and P.

11. The origin and literary character of the book of Daniel, in its present form.

12. The particular periods to which the various groups of psalms, as well as many individual psalms, are to be assigned.

§ 5. **The Content of Prophetic Material** is to be understood as including:

1. *The important lives and events* of a given period; for these, entirely apart from the record of them, constituted an influential factor in the development of Israel's religious thought. Prophecy of this kind (*e. g.*, the life of Samuel, the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib in 701 B. C.) may be called *living prophecy*.

2. *Stories of the past* concerning great lives and significant events written down for the encouragement or warning of Israel by one whose purpose is prophetic; for such stories (*e. g.*, those of Genesis, Exodus, Samuel, and Kings) were intended to influence the life of the people in the midst of whom the prophet worked, and to whom they were addressed. Prophecy of this kind may be called *experience prophecy*.

3. *Descriptions of the present*, in which the writer depicts the sins of the rulers, the corruption of the priests, and the ignorance of the masses; or expresses approval of the manifestation of a true desire for righteousness; or names the obligations growing out of the relationship sustained by Israel to Jehovah; or describes the punishment which Israel is now suffering because of her faithlessness; for such descriptive utterances were intended to turn the people away from their sins—a true prophetic purpose, and may properly be called *descriptive prophecy*.

4. *Predictions of the future*, in which the prophet foretells the divine judgment which is soon to fall upon a land full of corruption and to leave it a scene of desolation; or the glorious future of a redeemed Zion, abounding in peace and prosperity, a future which shall include even the coming of Jehovah himself, and the renovation and purification of the entire world; for, here again, the sole purpose of the utterance is to deter the people or to persuade them to come nearer to Jehovah and to live lives more worthy of his character. Such utterance is properly called *predictive prophecy*.

§ 6. **A Classification of Prophetic Material According to Historical Periods** will follow the usual divisions of Hebrew history; viz., early (down to 621 B. C.), middle (621–444 B. C.), and late (444–161 B. C.).

The close connection between history and prophecy not only justifies but demands the adoption of the same general divisions. The history of the Hebrew nation is, for the most part, a history of thought, rather than of life or of action. Prophecy is one phase of that thought, and is to be understood only as it stands in proper relation to the other phases.

§ 7. **The Early Period** of Hebrew history (to 621 B. C.) will include the larger portion of the prophetic development; for prophetism is the earliest of the three great factors entering into the history of Hebrew thought (the others being the priestly element, and the wisdom element). In this *early* period we find three stages of prophetic growth, viz.:

1. *The patriarchal*, extending to the time of Samuel (1100 B. C.), and including:

a) Institutions expressive of religious thought, and especially those employed in connection with oracular consultation.

b) The facts of history, whether lives or events, from Abraham to Samuel, in so far as they had significance in connection with the development of Israel's religious life, *e. g.*, the exodus from Egypt.

c) The ancient traditions, whatever they were, inherited by Israel, and handed down from father to son.

d) Actual utterances by religious leaders of prophetic spirit, which may safely be attributed to this period.

2. *The Davidic*, extending from Samuel to Solomon, and called Davidic because David was the central figure of the great group, Samuel, Saul, David, and Solomon. This period may properly be called that of the *United Kingdom*, and will include:

a) The institutions which had their origin, or on which special emphasis was placed, in this period; *e. g.*, the prophetic schools, the temple.

b) The lives of these men in so far as they influenced and instigated religious thought, together with the events of national importance connected with those lives; *e. g.*, the founding of the monarchy.

c) Old traditions concerning the patriarchs, and new traditions just forming concerning Israel's earliest leaders.

d) Oral utterances of prophets of the period, like Samuel, Nathan, Gad, and others, handed down, due allowance being made for accretions in the transmission.

e) Actual literary pieces of a prophetic character coming from this period, whether in the form of stories, addresses, or psalms.

3. *The prophetic stage*, so called because during this period prophet-

ism was the most conspicuous factor in Israelitish thought. Here two separate, yet closely connected, growths present themselves:

*a) The northern* (937-722 B. C.), which includes, besides the institutions and traditions of northern Israel, the work of Elijah, Elisha, and Jonah, who did not write; also that of Amos and Hosea, who were the first literary prophets; and the story-literature which took form at this time, including the E-narrative.

*b) The southern* (760-630 B. C.), which includes, besides the institutions and traditions of southern Israel, the prophetic narrative J; the literary work of Isaiah, Micah, and Nahum; and the story-literature which took form at this time.

§8. **The Middle Period** (622-444 B. C.) finds prophecy at its highest point and carries it in its decay through three stages:

1. *Pre-exilic*, or the prophecy of Jeremiah and his contemporaries (640-586 B. C.). Here are assigned, in particular, (*a*) the legal and story-literature found in Deuteronomy and the earlier portions of Kings; (*b*) the utterances of Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, and the earlier sermons of Ezekiel; and (*c*) such prophetic psalms as may be so treated.

2. *Exilic*, or the prophecy of the captivity (586-538 B. C.). Here belong (*a*) the significance of such lives as Jeremiah's, and such events as the destruction of Jerusalem; (*b*) the later sermons of Ezekiel, the utterances of Obadiah, portions of the collection found in Isaiah, chaps. 40-66, and perhaps the original of Daniel; and (*c*) some psalms.

3. *Post-exilic*, or the prophecy of the Restoration (538-444 B. C.). Here belong the sermons of Haggai and Zechariah (chaps. 1-8), the book of Malachi, additions to earlier prophecies, and many psalms, although most of these are priestly in their tone.

§9. **The Late Period** brings prophecy to its end (160 B. C.), and includes only the last and dying words of prophecy, which really have more of the character of apocalypse than of true prophecy. Here belong the books of Joel, the material of Zechariah, chaps. 9-11, 12-14, the story of Jonah, later additions to the earlier prophets, and, in its present form, the story of Daniel. The psalms of this period are almost wholly priestly.

§10. **The Work of the Prophet**, viewed externally in distinction from the inner thought of prophecy, deserves careful study, since much depends upon the immediate environment which conditioned the prophetic thought. Each historical period makes a special contribution to this subject. The principal heads of classification are the following:

1. *The private life* of the prophet, including his parentage, home, education, occupation, and social position.

2. *The political activity* of the prophet, including his attitude toward the home government, his policy in relation to foreign nations, the new measures which he proposes, and his general political point of view.

3. *The pastoral activity* of the prophet, in its various forms of preaching, of individual work, teaching in schools, charitable work, etc.

4. *The literary activity* of the prophet, including story-writing, its methods and characteristics; sermon-writing; editorial revision of earlier writings; general literary form.

5. *The prophetic reception of the divine message*, as by forms of sorcery and divination, the use of external agencies such as music, the use of the lot, the urim and thummim, dreams, visions or ecstatic trances, and spiritual enlightenment.

6. *The prophetic proclamation of the divine message*, by tongue and pen, through symbols and symbolic actions, by the use of literary skill, and by the employment of oratorical methods.

§ 11. **The Principal Ideas** of prophetism, as they were presented from period to period, form a definite body of teaching, including many subjects. These subjects may be roughly classified as follows:

1. *As relating to God and the supernatural world:*

a) The idea of God, his personality, his names, and his self-manifestations.

b) The various attributes of God.

c) God in creation and in history.

d) Angels, cherubim, seraphim.

e) Evil spirits; sorcery, witchcraft, etc.

2. *As relating to man:*

a) The origin of man, his nature, dignity, destiny.

b) The origin and nature of sin and guilt.

c) Atonement for sin.

d) Death and the future world.

3. *As relating to the future of Israel:*

a) The coming of Jehovah; the day of Jehovah.

b) The holy land in which Israel will dwell.

c) The future destruction of the "nations."

d) The new covenant, individual instead of national.

e) The royal order and the messianic king.



- f) The place of prophetism in the new régime.
- g) The place of the church in the new régime.
- h) The suffering servant; the vicarious idea.
- 4. *As relating to ethical standards and worship:*
  - a) Morality and standards of morality for individual and nation.
  - b) Righteousness and faith.
  - c) A covenant relationship between God and man.
  - d) Attitude toward worship and forms of worship.

§ 12. **The Various Schools of Interpretation** may be arranged in three groups:

1. *The rationalistic school* denies the existence in Hebrew prophetism of any element or factor not found in the history of other nations. The visions of the prophets are only the aspiration and imaginings of a school of poets; their predictions have not been fulfilled, and their fulfilment need not be expected.

2. *The predictive school* lays greatest emphasis on the predictive element in prophecy, other elements being largely ignored. This school has two divisions:

a) The literal interpreters, who understand that the prophetic predictions will be fulfilled in their literal meaning.

b) The spiritual interpreters, who maintain the fulfilment of the spirit, not the letter of the predictions.

3. *The historical school* assigns to prediction a less important place, and emphasizes the historical element in prophecy, and the ethical character of the prophet's work in and for his own times. Here again two divisions exist:

a) The conditional interpreter of the predictive element teaches that the various predictions are conditioned rather than absolute, and consequently capable of fulfilment only in case of the realization of the condition expressed or implied.

b) The idealistic interpreter understands that the predictions were ideal representations based upon a high conception of God; and that these representations have been gradually realized as these higher ideas of God have been accepted.

### § 13. **Books on Prophecy.**<sup>2</sup>

SCHULTZ, *Old Testament Theology*, 2 vols. (1868, 5th ed. 1896, transl. 1892); KUENEN, *The Prophets and Prophecy in Israel* (1875, transl. 1877); W. R. SMITH, *The Prophets of Israel* (1882, new ed. 1895); ORELLI, *Old Testament Prophecy* (1882,

<sup>2</sup>This list is intended to include only the most important books on the subject of prophecy.

transl. 1885); BRIGGS, *Messianic Prophecy* (1886); PIEPENBRING, *The Theology of the Old Testament* (1886, transl. 1893); KIRKPATRICK, *The Doctrine of the Prophets* (1892); MONTEFIORE, *Religion of the Ancient Hebrews* ("Hibbert Lectures" for 1892); CORNILL, *The Prophets of Israel* (1894, transl. 3d ed. 1898); MCCURDY, *History, Prophecy, and the Monuments*, 3 vols. (1894-1901); F. H. WOODS, *The Hope of Israel* (1896); G. A. SMITH, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, 2 vols. (Expositor's Bible, 1896-98); RIEHM, *Messianic Prophecy* (3d ed. 1900); G. S. GOODSPEED, *Israel's Messianic Hope* (1900); DAVIDSON, art. "Prophecy and Prophets," HASTINGS's *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. IV (1902); CHEYNE, GUTHE, AND VOLZ, art. "Prophetic Literature," *Encyclopædia Biblica*, Vol. III (1902).

DUHM, *Die Theologie der Propheten* (1875); BRUSTON, *Histoire critique de la littérature prophétique* (1881); KÖNIG, *Der Offenbarungsbegriff des Alten Testaments*, 2 vols. (1882); MAYBAUM, *Die Entwicklung des israelitischen Prophetenthums* (1883); LOTZ, *Geschichte und Offenbarung im Alten Testament* (1891); SMEND, *Lehrbuch der alttestamentlichen Religionsgeschichte* (1893, 2d ed. 1899); MARTI, *Geschichte der israelitischen Religion* (3d ed. 1897); VOLZ, *Die vorexilische Jakwe-prophetie und der Messias* (1897); GIESEBRECHT, *Die Berufsbegabung der alttestamentlichen Propheten* (1897); KITTEL, *Profetie und Weissagung* (1899); KÖNIG, *Das Berufsbewusstsein der alttestamentlichen Propheten* (1900); KRAETZSCHMAR, *Prophet und Seher im alten Israel* (1901); A. B. DAVIDSON, *Old Testament Prophecy* (1904).



AIN JALUD.